

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 2

By Henry

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Monsignor George Rohling of Nashville.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that the members of this General Assembly and the citizens of Tennessee learned of the passing of Monsignor George Rohling; and

WHEREAS, the oldest and longest serving priest in Tennessee, Monsignor Rohling was an outstanding person who performed his religious duties with extraordinary dedication and unprecedented devotion, giving unselfishly of himself, his time and his talents for the greater good of his faith, and the greater Nashville community; and

WHEREAS, throughout his remarkable life, Monsignor Rohling performed his religious duties with remarkable diligence and dexterity; his ability and spirituality should serve as benchmarks for other priests and religious leaders to emulate; and

WHEREAS, a priest for seventy-one years in the Diocese of Nashville, Monsignor George Rohling served at six local parishes, taught at Father Ryan High School, and served as chaplain at Saint Thomas Hospital during his lifetime, rightfully earning the respect of his peers and diocesan leaders alike for the superior quality of his Christian service and the depth and sincerity of his faith; and

WHEREAS, born on October 28, 1912, in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, George Rohling was the fourth of seven children born to Ben H. and Anna Hollmann Rohling, German immigrants who had settled on a Lawrence County farm with the help of the German Catholic Homestead Association; and

WHEREAS, devout Catholics and parishioners at Sacred Heart Church in Lawrenceburg, the Rohlings sent their son to Sacred Heart School and upon his graduation took advantage of an offer from the Daughters of Charity, who operated Saint Thomas Hospital in

Nashville, that allowed the sons of families from throughout Tennessee to live and work at the hospital so they could attend Nashville Catholic High School for Boys, which later became Father Ryan High School; and

WHEREAS, earning his keep working as an elevator operator and switchboard operator while attending Father Ryan, Monsignor Rohling graduated in 1931 as class salutatorian and entered the priesthood, having felt the Lord lead him toward that path while attending a class retreat during his senior year; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor Rohling attended St. Bernard College in Alabama, St. Gregory Seminary in Cincinnati, and St. Mary of the West Seminary in Cincinnati before he was ordained by Bishop William Adrian at Sacred Heart Church in Lawrenceburg on May 18, 1939; and

WHEREAS, assigned to serve as an assistant pastor at St. Mary's Church in downtown Nashville, Monsignor Rohling also returned to his alma mater, where he taught English, religion and history at Father Ryan High School from 1939 to 1950; and

WHEREAS, during his laudable career, Monsignor Rohling also served as priest at St. John Vianney in Gallatin, Holy Name and St. Henry parishes in Nashville, and St. Joseph in Madison and led the organization and establishment of Saint Frances Cabrini Church in Lebanon; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, Monsignor Rohling was tasked to find property for a summer camp for Catholic children and without official permission, used personal funds to purchase the 147-acre tract near Fairview that would become Camp Marymount; today, the facility stands as one of the few Catholic summer camps still operating in the region, and in 2005 the camp's new chapel was named "St. George's Chapel" in his honor; and

WHEREAS, a prolific builder and organizer, Monsignor Rohling built a school and rectory while he served as pastor of St. John Vianney Church in Gallatin, where he was also responsible for the mission in Lebanon; his resolute efforts led to the establishment of St. Francis Cabrini Church in Lebanon, the first Catholic church in Wilson County; and

WHEREAS, named to head St. Joseph in Madison in 1954, Monsignor Rohling oversaw the development of a new school, gymnasium, rectory, and church during his seventeen years there and was named a monsignor in 1967 while at St. Joseph; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, Monsignor Rohling became pastor at St. Henry, and once again his organizational skills and energy led to the construction of a new rectory and parish center, expansion of the school, and stronger bonds between parishioners; and

WHEREAS, during his time at St. Henry, he oversaw the development and construction of the Cloisters, a subdivision for senior citizens behind St. Henry; retiring in 1982 but staying on at St. Henry as the associate pastor, Monsignor Rohling lived for a time at the Cloisters; and

WHEREAS, highly respected and deeply admired by his parishioners as well as the Nashville community, Monsignor George Rohling continually gave of his time and talent to help in any capacity over the years, including service as the USO-NCCS director for Nashville during World War II and aiding the resettlement of refugees from war-torn Europe as the diocesan director; and

WHEREAS, known for his ecumenical work, Monsignor George Rohling was a charter member of the Nashville branch of the National Council of Christians and Jews and also diligently carried out the Lord's work as the vicar general for the Diocese of Nashville and served on the Diocese's finance board; and

WHEREAS, a member of over twenty boards, including Father Ryan High School and Aquinas College, at one time during his life, Monsignor Rohling also served as chaplain of the Tennessee Knights of Columbus and the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia Congregation; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor Rohling was also an avid football fan, who was devoted to Father Ryan's gridiron teams and the Notre Dame Fighting Irish, often traveling to games during his younger years; and

WHEREAS, as detailed in his biography, *Yes, Lord!*, published for his golden jubilee in 1989, Monsignor Rohling's unparalleled legacy of courage, boundless energy, and religious devotion will forever be etched in the hearts and minds of his beloved parishioners, former students, dear friends, and membership of the Diocese of Nashville; and

WHEREAS, Monsignor Rohling was preceded in death by his parents, Ben and Anna Hollmann Rohling, his brothers, Louis, Charles, Raymond, and Bernie Rohling, and his sisters, Monica Merkel and Ann Marie McRedmond; he is survived by his sister-in-law, Teresa Rohling, and numerous nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the celebrated life of this exceptional Christian servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Monsignor George Rohling, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life and performing God's work with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our deepest sympathy and offer our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Monsignor George Rohling.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.